Since Strangling Isn't An Option...

a presentation by

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Objectives

"This is the best solution I know to resolving our personality conflicts."

- Understand what makes people difficult
- Create practical solutions for dealing with difficult people

Facts

- A recent Gallup Poll declared that 21% of respondents said they were somewhat angry at work, at times enough to act out physically.

- A USA Today/Gallup Poll found that 78% of Americans believe rude and selfish behavior has increased at highways and airports.

- There were 534 incidents of difficult passengers in the transportation industry in 1999 — up from 66 in 1997

Definition of Difficult

Someone who impedes action

Origins of Difficultness
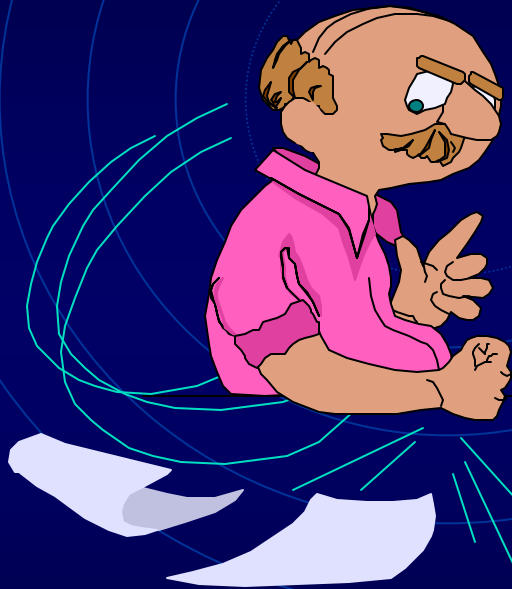
- Studies at the University of Tennessee found that anger derives from two origins:
  - Inability to take action (powerlessness and frustration)
  - Presence of an "ism"(unfairness or betrayal by the system)

Organizational Issues at NASA

- Downturn in staff —
  - NASA: from 24,000 in '93 to 17,000+ in '99-00
  - GSFC: from 4300 to 3300

- Ability to recruit and retrain (given hiring freezes)

- Change in administration

- NASA's role in the industry vis a vis design, principal investigators on missions, hardware application and competition from the private sector, universities, etc…

- Strategic Resources Review

- Viability of the space station

Anger

A Women's Anger Research Project discovered two ways we deal:

- Suppression (directed internally and dangerous)

- Expression (usually inappropriate)

So the question becomes —

"How do we deal with the anger and frustration ignited by our interactions with difficult people in a healthier and more productive way?"

Principle No. 1

- For every action…

Principle No. 2

- The stronger of two emotions dominates!
  - Remembrance technique
  - Change your thinking
  - Change your body
  - Touch your belly button
  - Shake it off
  - Go find someone you like

Principle No. 3

- Be compassionate/have understanding

Principle No. 4

- Be solution-oriented
  - Ask "what can we do about this?"

6 Step Whole Brain Approach:

1. Neutralize

2. Watch body language

3. Listen and acknowledge

4. Move them from right to left

5. Propose solutions

6. Act

Real Life

"Someone who constantly whines and complains about everything. Always has a negative comment …"

Do you …

- Tell them how right they are and what a drag it is to work here
- Ask them questions that orient them into solution
- Tell them where to go, or
- All of the above?

Real Life

"Sometimes in the workplace people can be too busy or distracted to deal with the situation you are presenting to them so they can be difficult to deal with at that moment"

Do you ...

- Insist on them talking to you
- Say "Hello, am I invisible?"
- Ask "Is this a good time? If not, when would be better?" or
- None of the above?